

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

STODDARD'S POEMS.

THE BOOK OF THE EAST, AND OTHER POEMS.
By RICHARD HENRY STODDARD. 12mo. pp. 249. Os-
good & Co.

The reflective element appears more strongly developed in the composition of these poems than in most of the earlier productions of the author, although whatever he has written betrays a certain spirit of contemplation as well as the active exercise of the imaginative faculty. But the present volume is pervaded by a deeper and riper vein of thought, exhibiting a growth of intellectual power, with a cheerful promise that the fruits of maturity will possess a still richer flavor than the luxuriant prentiments of vernal aspiration. A more profound experience of life has given a less sensuous and more earnest character to the artistic tendencies of the poet, while it has not chilled the ardor of his fancy, or impaired the fertility of his invention. The progress of years, however, has not imbued his heart with the spirit of joyousness, nor even of serenity, in view of the enigma of existence, nor softened the somber colors in which the battle of life is reflected from his poetry. There is still the expression of unrest, a tender wail over hopes that have blossomed but to perish, over purposes that have been defeated in the turmoil of the world, and ideals that have only dawned upon the soul to find no counterpart in reality. The speculative suggestions of the age, which have impressed their subtle influence upon every sphere of modern thought, appear also to have invaded the sanctuary of the poet, and impeded the solaces of religious faith. Rarely has the confession of human incompleteness to fathom the mysteries of the universe, and compass a knowledge of divine things, been more impressively uttered than in the following pathetic announcement of the soul's despair:

Why stand ye gaping round me?—

What is there that you hope to find?
I see the clouds, which the cold wind

Drives round the world from morn to event!

The world, ploughed with ancient scars!

The gravings on the mountains!

The altars to the stars!

Look for God!—

Have ye beheld him there?

You, or your fathers, in their prime?

Or, in your youth, at any time?

The wise, the tair,

Who has told—? I will not say his face;

But where his feet have trod!

What have you seen?—

Disclose all!

Why not look down the sea?

This deep, and most creative; what hides

In the upper regions?

Still lurking, and still secret may be!

To look for God, tell me this!

How know ye that He is?

Because your fathers told ye so; and they

Because, of old, they told them so!

As it is now, so it is now.

And who in the Pearly gates have passed away?

Nothing can come from nothing. Well, what then?

The Earth, with all its men—

The little insect burrowing in the soil,—

Sun, plants, etc., etc.

Many have been made by God!

Why make I man in me?—

Who said the mud foundations fail?

The Elements that build the wall?

Why make me?

We have not yet beheld this God on High;

Not known His voice, nor seen His eye, nor died!

If we know nothing of Him, yet we feel;

We feel love's kisses sweet—

The wine that sets our feet—

The sun that warms us—

Gladness in the heart when the sun breaks,

On the soft sea, in the quiet lakes,

Delight in the world seen in the sky,

And heat in my eyes,

When love, the best of earth, has kiss over, dies!

But when we name God, and grope so far above,

Whose love, we feel, is Power, whose heart, we hope, is

Love.

On the worlds below him,

In the dust below him,

We may now—

We may now—

And indeed, he is, to his own eyes,

And he is not this tremendous Universe!

Higher than your arrows fly,

Deeper than your plumbets fall,

Is the Deep, the Most High,

If the All in All!

Several of the poems in this volume breathe a similar hopeless spirit, which is sometimes carried to a painful extent in the personal applications that evince the poet's need of communication rather than the scruples of individual reserve. A specimen of this class may be found in the following regretful, though scarcely repeatable, effusion:

What shall I do to live right?

My life is wrong. I feel it so;

I bear about a trifled woe;

I pierce with a million woes;

When I come to grief, more, more;

I am too happy, with them;

I lived my life, another men;

I bore the burdens that they bore.

There was a sweetness then in tears;

There was a bitterness in pain;

Not sweet but now remain;

They perished with my early years;

I lived, I knew no how; but now

I know too well the way I live;

But what does all my knowledge give?

A hollow leaden living now.

This is my sorriest day and night;

The last act of my ruined soul;

The life is wrong;—

What shall I do to make it right?

The blended Epicureanism and Stoicism of these brief stanzas, which form a consecutive trio in the volume, remind one of the Goethean philosophy of life, and may perhaps be taken as the practical creed of the poet.

It is a winter night,

And the sky is white;

One of the last of the flies of the snow!

Once it was as bright as the sun;

With the roses shimmer'd, but

But the roses fled with summer long ago!

We saw a merry time,

In the joyful days of June;

And we dived down in the garden in the light;

Now the garden's gone;

And our hearts are dark and dumb,

As we huddle o'er the embers here to-night!

LEAVES.

What is life, and what are we?

Only leave upon a tree;

Green to-day, to-morrow rear;

Then we're no longer here!

Leave, fair and true to us;

Grow, old, up, old, up the tree;

Now they crumble in the mold,

With their histories untold.

So shall we? It is our lot;

Thou to die, and be forgot;

By and by the tree will fall;

One oblivion waits for all.

COFFEE AND PATE.

Life is bad, because we know it;

Death, because we know it not;

We will not fear or mourn;

Every day we're born;

Coward hearts who shrink and fly,

Are not fit to live or die!

Knowing life, we should not fear it;

Neither death, for that's unknown;

Courage, patience, these are virtues

Which for many sin alone;

Who's fit to live and die?

He is fit to live and die!

The same strain is repeated in the mystical lines

entitled

THE MESSENGER AT NIGHT.

A fax at the window;

A tap on the pane;

Who is it that wants me

To-night in the rain?

I have lighted my chamber,

And brought out my wine;

For a score of good fellows

Were coming to me.

The darkness had fallen,

And the rain in the night;

The man at the window,

To tap on the pane!

I hear the rain patter;

I hear the wind blow;

I hate the wild weather;

And yet I must go!

I could moan like the wind now,

And weep like the rain;

But the Thing at the window

Is tapping again!

I check it. I tap;

I tap, I tap, I tap, I tap;

I tap, I tap, I tap, I tap!

I tap, I tap, I tap, I tap!